



Sean Devine, Festival Coordinator
Vancouver Celebrates Diwali
4 – 3418 Adanac
Vancouver, BC V5K 5H5
sean.devine09@yahoo.ca
604.992.3789

Mita Naidu, Chair
Vancouver Celebrates Diwali
paromita.naidu@gmail.com
778.389.6482

Vancouver Celebrates Diwali 2009

VCD 2009: October 8 – 18, 2009

6th Anniversary Celebration of South Asian Community Arts Festival

Vancouver, BC – September 15, 2009 – Vancouver Celebrates Diwali invites you to Light Your Spirit!

The 6th Anniversary Vancouver Celebrates Diwali Festival, presented by Rogers Wireless, takes place from **Oct 8 – 18**, with events taking place across Vancouver. This city-wide festival features a diverse array of music, dance and comedy performances from South Asian artists ranging from the world-famous to emerging, to the best of Vancouver's local professional talent. The celebration continues with arts workshops, crafts vendors, and of course lots of delicious Indian cuisine! VCD 2008 drew over 4500 people to this consistently growing festival. VCD 2009 promises to be our biggest and most ambitious year ever!

Event Listings for VCD 2009. For more information, please visit www.vandiwali.ca

Moving Landscape / October 8 – 10: The Scotiabank Dance Centre, 8pm

Enjoy an evening of contemporary South Asian dance featuring top-tier artists from across North America. Performers include and more. **Moving Landscape** presents world-renowned South Asian dance companies **Parijat Desai Dance Company** from New York City, and **Dakshina / Daniel Phoenix Singh Dance Company** from Washington, DC. These groundbreaking performers are forming the bridge between the classical and the contemporary, and reflect the creative tensions and traditions of living in a multicultural metropolis. **Moving Landscape** will demonstrate both the strengths and fragilities of traditional art, and its vital importance to a modern culture looking for roots. Presented with the support of The Dance Centre and New Works. Admission \$17 at the door, with additional charges if purchased through www.ticketstonight.ca.

Arts & Culture Workshops / October 8 – 16: Various locations

Sponsored by BCGEU and CIBC). Workshops in bhangra dancing, dhol drumming, diya painting, sari wrapping and henna painting. Venues include Renfrew, Killarney, West End and Sunset Community Centres and South Vancouver Neighborhood House. See website for dates.

Diwali Downtown / October 18: Roundhouse Community Centre, 12pm – 7pm

Sponsored by Coast Capital Savings. Spend the afternoon in a Punjabi-market atmosphere. **Diwali Downtown** is a day-long extravaganza that blends the best of traditional/classical South Asian arts with the most cutting edge of contemporary/fusion forms, all with an emphasis on showcasing and promoting the best local South Asian artists. Our popular dance series presents styles ranging from Bharatnatyam to Bollywood and Keralanadanam to Bhangra. **Diwali Downtown** showcases a wide assortment of musical styles from Hindustani to Hip-Hop and Classical Persian to Punjabi Rock. Enjoy henna painting, rangoli design, Indian food, and of course, an incredible line-up of some of the region's best-known folk and contemporary South Asian musicians, singers and dancers. With over 50 performers including **Chin Injeti, UBC Girlz, Sunee Dhaliwal, Sangha, Daksh Kubba, Shan-E Punjab, FootEdge** and many more. See next page for full list. Free admission and great for families and all ages.

For more info, to obtain photos, or to discuss media opportunities, please contact:

Sara Ramsay, Media Relations
604.719.3544
sararamsay@screamingmuse.ca

- or -

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TURN FOR MORE INFO...



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Artists & Performers for VCD 2009:

Dakshina Dance Company (Washington, DC)
Parijat Desai Dance Company (New York City)
WINNIPEG TBA
Chin Injeti
Shan-E Punjab
Sunee Dhaliwal
Vidyasagar Vankala
UBC Girlz
Dhol Nation Academy
Sangha
Malavika Santhosh
Daksh Kubba
FootEdge Dance Company
BPM
Babukishan Das Baul
Bollywood Shenanigans
Anu Sharma
Shamik Bilgi
Sudnya Mulye
Senior Ladies Garba
Bucky Top
Shiamak Indo-Jazz
Rupinder Sidhu
Uma Sharda

Contemporary Dance – Moving Landscape
Contemporary Dance – Moving Landscape
Classical Dance – Moving Landscape
Jazz / R&B Music – Diwali Downtown
Bhangra Dance (kids group) – Diwali Downtown
Stand-up Comedy – Diwali Downtown
Carnatic Music – Diwali Downtown
Bhangra Dance – Diwali Downtown
Dhol Drum Music – Diwali Downtown
Persian Music – Diwali Downtown
Kerelanadanam Dance – Diwali Downtown
Hindi Fusion Music – Diwali Downtown
Bollywood Dance – Diwali Downtown
Hip Hop / Poetry – Diwali Downtown
TBA Music – Diwali Downtown
Sketch Comedy – Diwali Downtown
Kathak Dance – Diwali Downtown
Beat Box Music – Diwali Downtown
Bharata Natyam Dance – Diwali Downtown
Garba Dance – Diwali Downtown
Dancehall Dance – Diwali Downtown
Indo-Jazz Dance – Diwali Downtown
Visual Arts – Diwali Downtown
Visual Arts – Diwali Downtown

Cut and paste this link into your internet browser to see our short promo video from 2008!

<http://motionformusic.com/diwali/vandiwali09.mov>

VCD Background Info

VCD is a registered non-profit society that is managed and directed by a group of dedicated volunteers and community partner staff. VCD appreciates the public sector funding support of the City of Vancouver, Canadian Heritage, and the BC Arts Council. Community partnerships and associations include the City of Vancouver, Roundhouse Community Centre, Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation, South Vancouver Neighborhood House, New Works and The Dance Centre. Corporate sponsors include Festival Presenting Sponsor Rogers Wireless, Diwali Downtown Event Sponsor Coast Capital Savings, Arts & Culture Workshops Co-sponsors BCGEU & CIBC. Media sponsors include Global TV, JCDecaux, CKNW, 24 Hours Vancouver, RED FM, Shaw Multicultural Channel, and RJ 1200.

The festival of Diwali is known all across the world and celebrates the universal light that exists in everyone. It is a time of unity and joy, celebrating light over darkness and good over evil, encouraging all Vancouverites to spread the universal message of Diwali and to learn the traditions of their friends and neighbors. Diwali originates from India, but in the West it catapulted into a multicultural event with a universal message of light over darkness, enhancing the diversity of the creative arts, and becoming a site for cultural exchange and participation. Many fables, myths and legends are related to Diwali, all with a similar spiritual message: good over evil, illumination over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance. The universal message of Diwali makes this event truly inspiring to all. With world events affecting everyone, Diwali serves as a reminder to illuminate the mind and spirit during the darkest time of the year. This message of unity has helped Diwali become a mainstream multicultural celebration with large-scale events planned across the globe.



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VCD not only showcases the city's rich diversity, but also helps the South Asian arts community to flourish in the Lower Mainland and beyond. With the popularization of Bollywood and Bhangra in recent years, many other South Asian art forms have fallen to the wayside and may seem foreign and exotic to the mainstream population. There are many styles of dance and music that hail from different regions of India. The VCD Committee encourages artists from various disciplines to apply to perform each year. "We truly wish to promote the arts of India as practiced and performed by South Asians living all around the world. It is our goal to support and encourage these diverse developments, from folk, to the classical arts, as well as contemporary movements and share them with a larger global community," says Paromita Naidu, VCD Committee Chair.

Diwali acts as a vehicle in bridging cultural barriers by motivating everyone to participate and learn these new art forms. Community Centres have been very effective venues for these cultural exchanges. For the past several years, a group of Chinese seniors from Renfrew Park Community Centre have learned a South Asian dance and performed it in front of a large audience at one of the VCD Main Events, and will do so again this year. Preschoolers have learned Diwali fables during storytelling workshops, and adult volunteers have created rangoli floor designs at the doorsteps of several community centres. "Vancouver is enriched by the many cultures that call it home and celebrating Diwali is a very enjoyable way for neighbors to meet, share traditions and invent new and exciting customs," says Danita Noyes, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation.

VCD Fact Sheet

- This year Diwali falls on October 17. Vancouver's inaugural Diwali Celebration started in Fall 2004 with Opening Ceremonies at City Hall and a thousand participants throughout the week, which then grew to 1500 in 2005. Last year's festival drew almost 4500 to the various events and workshops.
- Diwali is celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs around the globe. From all the rich, colorful festivals originating from India, it is the one celebration that unifies and links all three religions.
- Diwali is celebrated by lighting a diya, creating rangoli, popping firecrackers, and having a community celebration with dance, music and food.
- A diya is an earthen clay oil lamp that is lit during Diwali to signify good over evil.
- Rangolis are intricate, geometrical floor designs created with rice powder and colored dyes, which symbolize gods, goddesses, or diyas. They are used to welcome guests and bring wealth and prosperity to the home.
- There are many different types of dance originating from India:
 - Classical: Bharatnatyam, Odissi, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Manipuri, Mohiniattam.
 - Folk: Garba (Western India), Bhangra (North), Giddha (North), Jawara (Central), Brita (Eastern), Bihu (Northeast), Dumhal (North), Padayani (South), Dollu Kunitha (Southwest).
 - Contemporary: Bollywood, Indo-Jazz
- During VCD, several Community Centres and Neighborhood Houses will be hosting arts & culture workshops, including West end Community Centre, Renfrew Community Centre, Killarney Center, South Vancouver Neighborhood House, Sunset Community Center. These workshops are geared towards all ages: preschoolers, youth, adults, seniors